

Word Finding Difficulties: Tips and Strategies

Speech and Language Therapy Department



Patient information leaflet

This leaflet will give those with word finding difficulties and their friends/families, tips and strategies on how to cope with this condition.

Why am I experiencing word finding difficulties?

Word finding difficulties are common following a stroke and can be very frustrating. It may mean getting stuck when trying to communicate, and often the more we try the harder it becomes.

The following tips will help you to either find the word you want, or another way to get your message across.

What word finding strategies can help me?

- Give yourself plenty of time – **DON'T RUSH**
- **DESCRIBE** the word
 - What does it look like?
 - What would you use it for/what does it do?
 - Where might you find it?
- Think of a **DIFFERENT WORD** that means the same
 - e.g. 'Upset' instead of 'sad'
- Think of an **OPPOSITE**
 - e.g. 'Not happy' instead of 'sad'
- Use a **TOTAL COMMUNICATION** approach – write it down, use gesture or point to something related
- Ask the other person to **RECAP** the conversation ('Where were we?') – this may help to trigger the word.

Tips for family and friends

- Be **PATIENT** and give them time to speak.
- **ENCOURAGE** them to think around the word, or think of another word that means the same
- **GESTURE** or **POINT** to objects that you think they might be trying to say

- **CHECK YOU HAVE UNDERSTOOD** the message correctly
- **BE HONEST** if you don't understand what they're trying to communicate
- **BE AWARE** that word finding difficulties can be extremely frustrating for both them and for you – try to show them that you understand their difficulties.

What activities can help with word finding?

- Crosswords and word searches
- Word games e.g. scrabble, boggle
- Name objects out loud as you are using them
- See how many items you can name in a category e.g. animals, fruit etc.

Reference sources

- www.stroke.org/we-can-help/survivors/stroke-recovery/post-stroke-conditions/physical/aphasia
- www.stroke.org.uk/sites/default/files/Communication%20problems%20after%20stroke.pdf

Additional support available

Stroke Association

- Helpline: 0303 3033 100
- Website: stroke.org.uk
- Email: info@stroke.org.uk

Association of Speech and Language Therapists in Independent Practice

- Telephone: 01494 488306
- Website: www.helpwithtalking.com

Contact details

Your Speech and Language Therapist can give you specific strategies or exercises to help.

Contact the Speech and Language Therapy department if you have any questions or concerns:

Telephone: 01483 571122 **ext** 4680

PALS and Advocacy contact details

Contact details of independent advocacy services can be provided by our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) who are located on the right hand side as you enter the main reception area. PALS are also your first point of contact for health related issues, questions or concerns surrounding RSCH patient services.

Telephone: 01483 402757

Email: rsc-tr.pals@nhs.net

Opening hours: 9.00am–3.00pm, Monday to Friday

If you would like information documents in large print, on tape or in another language or form please contact PALS.

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